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HOMEMAKERS' CHATS

Monday, December 12, 1938.

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "4-H CLUB MEMBERS MAKE THE HEADLINES." Information from the Extension Service, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

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When farm girls from Oklahoma, Minnesota, Utah, and Vermont have their pictures and stories in a Washington, D. C. paper, that's because they have done something of national interest and importance. These particular girls have been mentioned in every state, because they were the winners in the food preparation contest at the seventeenth annual 4-H Club Congress in Chicago late in November.

Many other 4-H Club members won prizes announced in the press,- both boys and girls. A 14-year old 4-H Club girl, Irene Brown of Alledo, Illinois, is the proud owner of a coal-black Aberdeen-Angus steer, named Mercer II. Her steer was declared the Grand Champion of the 39th annual International Livestock Exposition at Chicago, also last month. (You know that the 4-H Club Congress is held concurrently with the "International".) Irene's steer took the highest honors over the exhibits of a dozen expert cattle breeders. Which only serves to show that girls may do well in club lines usually selected by boys.

I have a handful of other clippings showing what 4-H club boys and girls have won at Chicago this past month. Many of you have read these fine reports in your own papers. As the toastmasters say, club work "needs no introduction" to rural people. But I was astounded to have a city friend of mine ask me the other day, in connection with one of these prize-winners, "Just what is this 4-H club, anyway?"

So this seems to be a good time to talk about 4-H clubwork generally for other city and town listeners who have not been in touch with this strong, constructive, educational youth organization. According to the latest figures from the Extension Service of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, there are at least a million three hundred thousand rural boys and girls enrolled at present in 4-H clubs. They range in age between 10 and 20. There are some in every state, and Puerto Rico, Alaska, and Hawaii have clubs, too.

Any rural boy or girl within the age limits who is able to carry on a demonstration of some better farming or homemaking activity may become a member of a 4-H club. That's all there is to it. There aren't any dues- just the obligation to do a piece of work that teaches a better way in homemaking or agriculture. Club members "learn to do by doing." Their four-leaf clover emblem with the "H" on each leaf expresses the spirit of clubwork which is embodied in the club pledge and creed. The four "H"s stand for Head, Heart, Hands, and Health. If there isn't a community or county 4-H club for a boy or girl to join, a few enterprising young people may apply to the state extension service for instruction in organizing one.



Members become so interested that they often carry several demonstrations simultaneously, and continue in club work as long as age permits. They are guided by volunteer "local leaders" who are under the direction of the state or county club agent. Just as agriculture differs in different parts of the United States, so club projects vary widely with the kind of local farming. Typical demonstrations include, among homemaking activities, growing a garden to fit the dietary needs of the family; canning surplus garden products; planning, preparing, and serve attractive and healthful meals; making or selecting suitable clothing in keeping with the family budget; keeping personal accounts; sharing responsibility for daily household tasks; at times, taking over the management of the home in the absence of the mother; making the home itself more satisfying; planting native shrubs and trees; helping with the intelligent care of younger brothers and sisters.

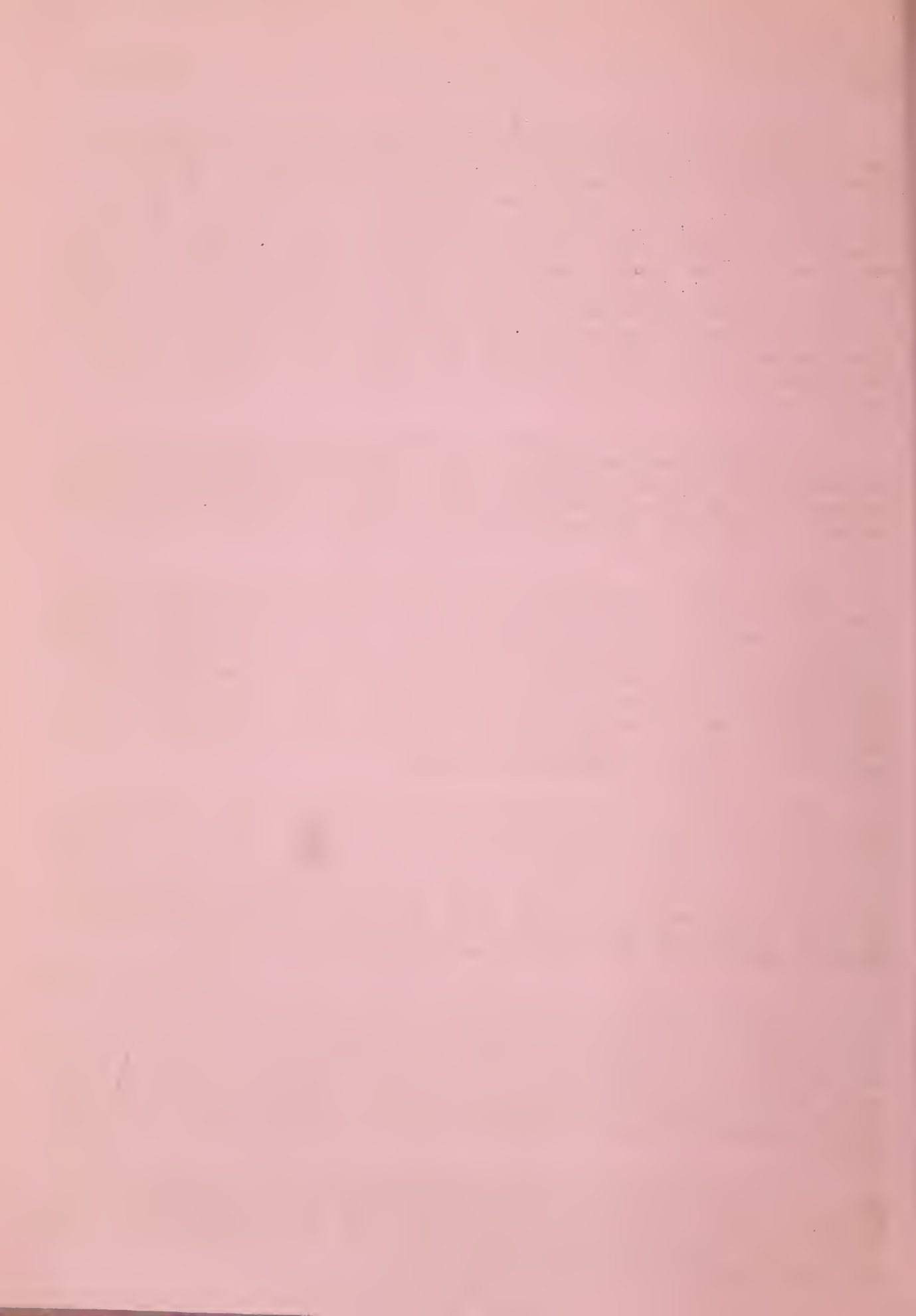
In agricultural-club activities, a member may grow an acre or more of cotton, corn, or some other crop; raise a garden, market fresh vegetables, supply the family table, and can the surplus; raise a flock of poultry; purchase, breed and care for a sow and her litter to maturity; care for a dairy calf to maturity, and build a dairy herd; run and repair farm machinery; or conduct some other phase of work that will meet a farm or community need.

The four girls I mentioned first were chiefly interested in food preparation. They learned a great deal about nutrition as they rolled up their records of meals prepared or baking done for sale. These girls were all of the so-called "teen age"- 17, 18, 16 and 18 years old. It is not unusual for a 16-year old 4-H club girl to do all the baking for a large farm family, or to can hundreds of jars of fruits and vegetables for the family table. When a member has had sufficient club experience and a worth while record she may be chosen to represent her community club at some large fair or exposition; or she may enter a national contest if it is open to 4-H members generally.

The same thing applies to 4-H boys. It's natural to find farm lads interested in the crop and livestock clubs, or in forestry work, farm accounting, or in learning to judge animals adequately. The fact that farming is a business to be learned is never lost sight of, and in its business aspects club work repays the 4-H member almost from the start. In many projects they learn to produce high quality crops, or animals, which are sold or exhibited to advantage. The girls realize that the farm home is an important part of the farm business, and apply themselves to the task of learning homemaking seriously.

Both boys and girls in some cases, have been able to put themselves through college on their earnings and prizes while in club work; others have built up herds of their own, or developed a market for home-raised products. Eminent psychologists of Yale University recently stated that "4-H club work is one of the greatest character building agencies in the United States, inasmuch as in meeting actual life situations on the farm and in the home, the school, or the community, it guides young people in making important and far-reaching decisions that give definite character training, through the formation of good habits in thinking and acting."

If you could look into the faces of the 2 boys and 2 girls from each state who are selected as delegates to the annual National 4-H Club Camp each June in Washington, D.C., you would feel convinced that this estimate is accurate. And by the way, keep an eye on Irene Brown's career. She has begun well with her Grand Champion steer. Some day you may hear of her as one of the Illinois delegates to the 4-H National Camp at the Nation's Capital!



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The wandering jew is one of the most common indoor vines. If you prefer to call it by its formal scientific name, that's Tradescantia. Cuttings of this plant easily take root in water and then you can set them in a pot of sandy soil. Wandering jew has several varieties which will grow indoors.

Cissus is a bushy climbing plant, very hardy, which you can grow in any room in the house. Many people enjoy the red and green strawberry geranium, too. This vine is most attractive growing down from a wall bracket.

For a darker corner of a room, the handsome tropical vine called philodendron cordata is an excellent choice because it thrives with very little light. This vine has very decorative dark green heart-shaped leaves. Still another choice is English ivy which will grow all winter in a bowl of water. You can cut slips of it in the fall, let them take root in water during the winter, and plant them outdoors when spring comes.

I almost forgot to mention the sweetpotato vine which makes such a rapid luxuriant growth in the house. Set a sweetpotato in a jar or bowl so that it is half in and half out of the water. Before long it will sprout very rapidly and give you plenty of greenery.

Speaking of potatoes reminds me of the listener who asked about the best temperature for keeping potatoes. Let's leave the flowers and vines and go down cellar.

Potatoes keep best if they are stored at about 50 degrees Fahrenheit or a little below. That's well above the freezing point, please notice. If the air is any warmer than this, the potatoes tend to shrink or to sprout. If it is any colder, the potatoes turn "sweet" and aren't so good for cooking. Nobody likes a sweet taste in a white potato. Another point that is important in successful storage is keeping the temperature even--not letting it be warm one day and cold the next. The best way to insure an even temperature is to have the storage room well insulated. Potatoes do best if the air is not too dry, and one or two open pans of water in the storage room will help to keep the air moist.

By the way, of course you know that dry, sound, clean, well-matured potatoes keep much better than those that are wet or dirty or bruised. Wet or dirty potatoes interfere with good circulation of air at the center and bottom of the pile, and encourage storage rots and premature sprouting. Potatoes that are cut, bruised or not mature also are subject to rot and lose weight faster than others.

One last question: "Is it true that you can get a patent on a plant?"

Answer: Yes, it has been true ever since May 1930 when the patent law was amended to cover new plant varieties. Since then several hundred plant patents have been granted, among them nearly 150 varieties of roses, including one that has almost no thorns and one that is almost black. Other patents have been granted for new varieties of carnations, freesias, lilies, dahlias, violets and so on to say nothing of many new varieties of tree fruits. Plant patents are granted only on new plants not in the trade prior to the passing of the amendment that are propagated by cuttings, budding or grafting, and not by seeds.

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